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**Land Use and Tenure Entitlement
Rights for Community-based Wildlife and
Forest Conservation in Taita Taveta,
Kenya**

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Abstract

This paper, discusses land use and tenure in terms of entitlement rights. Land is viewed as the basic resource through which other biological resources – in this case, wildlife and forests – are owned, used, managed and contested. In this regard, key issues in the concept of entitlement rights are highlighted. In this context, the paper then discusses briefly land, land use and tenure in Kenya. It narrows down to analyse land use and tenure in Taita Taveta District, describing the present tenure status with the aim of identifying ‘who owns which land and what use they make of it’. The rationale for the establishment and subsequent demarcation of the conservation areas (Tsavo National Park, existing and planned sanctuaries and various forest reserves) is also reviewed, with a focus on entitlement rights. Finally, the paper demonstrates that there is competition for land between the local communities, and between them and wildlife and forest conservation. This competition is viewed as the main reason for biodiversity loss and human-wildlife conflict. Therefore, clear entitlement rights to land – ownership, use and interventionism – would lead to fewer contestations and competition, ameliorate loss of biodiversity, human-wildlife conflict and facilitate socio-economic development.